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## THE COURSE OF SOVIET EXPANSION

By William Henry Chamberlin

One of the most important and least understood consequences of World War II was the removal of any effective check on Soviet expansion in the great Eurasian land mass. This was foreseen by Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa and one of the most astute elder statesmen of the British Empire. The following passage from a speech which Smuts delivered in London, on November 25, 1943, is well worth recalling now, for it possesses the ring of prophetic truth:

> "Russia is the new colossus on the European continent . . . With the others down and out and herself the mistress of the continent, her power will not only be great on that account, but will be still greater because the Japanese Empire will also have gone the way of all flesh. You will have Russia in a position which no country has occupied in the history of Europe."

Smuts understood well a point which many superficial thinkers in this country and in Great Britain have overlooked. The predominantly (although not invariably) defensive and passive character of Soviet foreign policy between the two great wars was not a result of the new socio-economic system in Russia, or of satiety, or of pacifist principles

It proceeded from a shrewd and realistic appraisal of the international situation at that time. The Soviet Union could not have taken a serious aggressive step outside its own borders without running the risk of bringing into action a hostile coalition of much greater potential military strength. Japan might well have been the nucleus of such a coalition in the East; Germany in the West.

But now Germany and Japan have been more than defeated. They have been pulverized to such a degree that neither can conceivably muster appreciable military power within any predictable future. And in the course of the war that ended with the defeat of the Axis, Europe and East Asia have been bled white, looted and gutted to such a degree that no Power or combination of Powers in these land areas represents a strong counterpoise

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to the Soviet Union. For Germany, moreover, the Potsdam Agreement means dissolution of such economic strength as was left after the fall of the Nazis.

II

So the stage is set for Russia to resume the process of conquest and expansion which has been a leitmotiv throughout its history. This process transformed the land-locked, semi-Asiatic principality over which Ivan the Terrible ruled in the Sixteenth Century into the Great Power, arbiter of Europe's destiny under Alexander I at the time of the Napoleonic Wars.

In the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires were a block to Russian penetration of the heart of Europe. Great Britain then thwarted the Russian imperial-religious dream of taking Constantinople and raising the Cross over the mosque that had once been Saint Sophia. Even so, Russian expansion continued; Russian armies marched to the conquest of romantic lands in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Stalin said in a widely-publicized statement of foreign policy in the early Thirties: "We do not want a foot of foreign soil; we shall not give up an inch of our own."

The Soviet leader did not say: "We do not want a foot of foreign soil except Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Eastern Poland, Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Eastern Czechoslovakia, parts of Finland and East Prussia." But this is the score to date of outright territorial acquisitions in Europe alone. And Communist-dominated governments are running the affairs of Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania.

III

Soviet expansive pressure varies in intensity from time to time and from place to place. At the present time there are signs of caution and reserve on the two flanks of Stalin's huge Eurasian empire, in Europe and the Far East. But in the southern direction, Russian diplomacy is feeling for weak points, as shown by the recent Iranian crisis, and by the rather too obvious anxiety to eliminate British influence in Greece.

The Soviet Government gives the impression of playing a long-term waiting game in

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China. It is digesting the solid advantages which accrued from the Soviet-Chinese Treaty of August, 1945. China's shadowy legal claim to sovereignty in Outer Mongolia was liquidated in what must have been the model totalitarian plebiscite of all time. Not a single Mongol found it advisable to cast his vote against annexation to the Soviet Union.

Machinery and equipment have been carried off on a large scale from Manchuria and Northern Korea. There are unconfirmed rumors that additional economic concessions, over and above the joint operation of the railway system and the privileges in the ports of Dairen and Port Arthur, were extracted from the Chinese Government as the price of permitting Nationalist troops to enter Manchuria. But there has not been, and seemingly will not be, any large-scale military support of the Chinese Communists.

Reasonably free and fair elections were held in Hungary and Austria under Russian occupation of the former and joint occupation in Austria. These have resulted in sharp political setbacks for Communism, attributable in no small measure to the undisciplined behavior of the Russian troops. Of course the Soviet military authorities continue to do as they please in these countries. But their willingness to permit free elections indicates that Hungary and Austria are not considered ripe for early Sovietization.

IV

The picture changes sharply if one turns to Soviet policy in countries which face southward. Russian-controlled elections in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have been as obviously fraudulent as those in Hungary and Austria were free. Both were boycotted by all opposition parties. The United States has only just recognized the puppet government of Romania, and the case of Bulgaria is still pending. The Ethridge report on the representative character of these governments, made at the request of Secretary Byrnes, has been withheld from the public.

The situation in the Balkans is closely connected with recent definitely aggressive Soviet policies in Iran and Turkey. The detachment of Iranian Azerbaijan from the effective control of the Government in Tehran was easy, as Soviet troops were in

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occupation of the region. A Soviet satellite political party carried out an uprising; Iranian troops were not permitted to enter the region; a certain number of "reactionaries" were killed; Azerbaijan became "autonomous". It is yet to be proved that the Iranian appeal to the Council of UNO will alter that.

Perhaps the biggest stakes for which Soviet diplomacy is playing now are in Turkey. A subtle war of nerves is in operation against the Turkish Government.

Last March the Soviet Government, after denouncing its treaty of non-aggression with Turkey, suggested the cession of the Kars and Ardahan districts of Asiatic Turkey and some more vaguely indicated changes in the status of the Dardanelles as the price of a new treaty.

More recently the diplomatic offensive against Turkey was stepped up. Two Georgian savants, S. R. Djanashia and N. Berdzenishvili, suggested that 10,000 square miles in Asiatic Turkey be handed over to the Soviet Union, on the curious ground that the Georgians lost it to the Turks in the Sixteenth Century. Soviet representatives in Turkey took a sudden interest in the fate of the Armenians and an "Armenian national council" in Alexandria put forward a demand that Armenian provinces in Turkey be returned to Russia.

The Turks have adopted an attitude more reminiscent of the Poles in 1939 than of the Czechs in 1938. They do not propose to give up a foot of their soil without a fight. And as Stalin at present clearly does not want a fight, the southward expansionist pressure has moved a little eastwards, to Iran, there to encounter the new obstacle of UNO.

It seems probable that the effort to reconcile the new southward course of Soviet Empire with the principles of UNO will constitute a major problem of Anglo-American diplomacy from now on. And if Russian pressure is intensified in the Near East, while relaxed in the Far East, the response of Western democracies might not be uniform. America is traditionally more concerned about China; Great Britain about Turkey, Iran, and India which lies beyond.

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Some advisers of President Truman are urging him to oust Secretary of State Byrnes and to replace him with James Forrestal, now Secretary of the Navy. But reliable political observers believe there is little likelihood of this shift in the near future. The President is too absorbed with the strike and OPA situation to undertake any such delicate political change.

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Prospects for a more democratic China became brighter last week, when the Political Consultation Conference embracing all political groups agreed on steps to achieve civil and economic reform. While this accomplishment should not be minimized, it would be only prudent to point out that the solution of the two knottiest problems -- on which peace in China depends -- are still to be worked out: (1) the integration of the Communist armies into the national armed forces; and (2) the degree of autonomy which the Communist-held areas will receive. So long as one part of the country can freely use its armed forces against another and there is no unified military control, peace hopes must remain dim. As for the second point, will Nationalist China permit Communist China to continue suppression of democratic rights, while Communists enjoy these rights in Nationalist territory? Obviously the really decisive agreements are yet to be reached.

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A prominent Eastern Democrat tells us that he finds President Truman with a changed attitude toward Europe: "When I saw Harry last May he scoffed at my fears of Russian policy. He said he thought that we had nothing to fear from Russia, but on the contrary we had to watch out for Britain. I had a private talk with him again last week. He's veered around. He complained of the trouble Russia is giving him, and he had nothing to say against Britain. He asked me to support the British loan on the ground that, unless it passed, the British Empire might collapse and then our last defense against Russia would be gone."

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The new Gouin Government in France has promised to abandon the generous spending which marked the de Gaulle régime and to launch a policy of retrenchment. French comment, however, shows some skepticism. L'Epoque compared the de Gaulle Government to a dissipated young gambler who inherits a great fortune, sells it and uses the proceeds, not for investment for the future but to pay his political debts. Combat says that the Gouin Government has passed from "half measures to three-quarter measures", but "it is doubtful if that constitutes progress". There is a chorus of approval of Gouin's courageous stand, but political observers recall that the fate of régimes in similar circumstances, whether under a Bruening or a Hoover, was not happy. It is also noted that the Communists who understand the social dynamics of such situations, seemed put out by de Gaulle's sudden resignation. They fear that they may share some of the unpopularity which goes with a deflationary régime. The Communists have circulated stories that de Gaulle has "reculé pour mieux sauter" and will launch a new party in the Spring.

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In apparent confirmation of this column's forecast (January 23) of troubles in Afghanistan comes a Moscow radio broadcast (January 24) describing a "revolt" in Afghanistan: "The Afghan police have recently arrested for anti-Government activities Deputy Premier of Afghanistan Abdurakhim Khan and a number of relatives and associates. . . . Abdurakhim Khan comes from the province of Kukhistan populated by national minorities, Tadjiks and others. Since his arrest two Afghan regiments have been sent to Kukhist, and police contingents have been increased as clashes may take place in this district. . . . In Afghan Government circles the question of the Premier's possible resignation is being discussed."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. III - No. 6

By Frank C. Hanighen February 6, 1946

A famine, even grimmer than anticipated, will stalk Europe in coming months with some unexpected repercussions on American consumers. This is the ominous message of last Saturday's State Department broadcast which, observers agree, contained more truth than the too frequent propaganda.

Europe will be short five million tons of wheat between now and July, no matter how much can be rushed there. "The situation is so bad in some places", emphasized Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "that there is only enough wheat and flour for a two week supply of bread." The State Department appeals to Americans to ration themselves on bread to ease this situation.

Action taken here to combat this situation may require "a return to wartime conditions in some sectors of our economy", warned the Department. Rolling stock, which had been expected to carry consumer goods to market, may have to be diverted to take wheat and coal to American ports for shipment to Europe, thereby delaying our return to normal consumer conditions.

The food situation is worse in Italy than it is in Germany. The average Italian today is getting only 1,000 calories a day, as compared with 1,500 a day in Germany and 3,000 a day in the United States. Political observers do not doubt that this famine will have unpleasant political results. There are shaky cabinets in France and Italy, and the ravaged areas of Central Europe and the Balkans are growing restless. Such conditions can bring forth a new crop of Communists. Ironically, the American Government, while denouncing the Peron Government, makes ships available to carry the essential Argentine wheat to Europe.

Meanwhile Senators are renewing pressure to lift the Government's ban on private relief and mails to Germany. It is believed that some elements in the Administration have not only blocked these measures of mercy but have put pressure on the British to withhold food which the latter would like to send to Germany.

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Britain is considering a change in its policy on the Continent, according to an unpublished report rendered President Truman by Mr. E. H. Stettinius, U.S. delegate to the UNO Security Council in London. The former Secretary of State has been talking with British leaders who express the following views: It is a cardinal principle of British policy to have one strong ally on the Continent. They would prefer to have France fill this role. But the political, economic and demographic condition of France is so unpromising that they feel that France is not strong enough. The stubbornness of General de Gaulle and, since his retirement, the new Government's reluctance to vote Army funds further discourage the British about France. In this predicament, the British see only one alternative -- to build up Germany as a potential ally, thoroughly controlled, of course, by Britain. Mr. Stettinius remarked in the above-mentioned report that this would violate the Potsdam Agreement.

While such a proposal may astonish some, it is wholly consistent with certain recent trends in British policy. Observers noted the formation of the outlines of such a policy in the historic speech of Marshal Smuts on November 25, 1943, often discussed in HUMAN EVENTS. On January 16, this column reported that the British are keeping intact the cadres of 30 German divisions in prison camps in Muenster. Finally, the British have waged an energetic fight in the Berlin Four Power Council in behalf of a higher figure for German steel production.

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# Notes and Quotes

"Though perhaps it is not always apparent in this column", writes J. Middleton Murry, in his Peace News (February 8), "I have great faith in Russia. Her present toughness is (I believe) a passing phase; though it may last long enough to give me the jitters to the end of my days. Stalin always appears to me as characteristic of Russia as Peter the Great was. It takes that kind of person to make headway against the enormous inertia of the Russian soul. But he does not touch the Russian soul very deeply. That probably retains all its great potentialities of humanity. The Russia of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Tchekov is only in abeyance; and when the desperate pre-occupation of the USSR with its own security is abated -- as sooner or later it must be -- the "pan-humanism" of the Russian will manifest itself again.

"This may be a streak of wishful thinking in me. But I shall take a lot of persuading that a people, whose classics are Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Tchekov, is not going to turn up trumps in the end."

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Neutral Switzerland possesses not only a vantage point for studying the world scene, but also highly trained observers to appraise its trends. We quote "Swiss Observer" on the Berne radio, in English, beamed to North America, February 28, 2:20 p.m., EST: "The destructive tendencies which have openly manifested themselves ever since the London Assembly of the United Nations have made further progress during the past week. Everywhere the forces of destruction are at work. If it were a question of demolition in view of a better reconstruction one might take such an evolution with equanimity, but unfortunately this does not seem to be the case, since the daily trend of affairs points more towards the change from one totalitarianism to another. . . .

" . . . Here in Europe the Spanish problem is symptomatic of a larger issue. Unfortunately . . . the Communists are profiting by the situation to the fullest extent. They can always count on the ignorance of blind idealists with the connivance of willing tools and with the help of discontented elements. There can be no doubt that General Franco's régime is ripe for disappearance. Whatever final proof has been needed in this respect, it has been furnished by the lack of political judgment shown by the latest executions which have been ordered by the Caudillo. But there are ways and means of showing one's disapproval and condemnation of acts perpetrated by a foreign Government. Those adopted by France are certainly not the most opportune. Fortunately, the lead is in Anglo-American hands. London and Washington know only too well that the moment is not very well-chosen for cutting diplomatic relations and shutting off frontiers. One has to build up again now and not demolish the little which still exists."

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We recommend to our readers two excellent articles by Christopher Emmet in The Commonweal, (February 8, 15), which, while their point of departure is the Argentine situation, provide a shrewd examination of the current bogey-term, "fascism": " . . . just because fascism, like communism, is a left-wing and not a right-wing movement and gains its principal support from unjustly oppressed economic classes, we can only fight fascism in the Argentine or elsewhere by liberal and progressive economic policies. Since fascism, like communism, misleads the workers first by false promises and later by false information it must be met by giving them real benefits. . . . Paradoxical though it may seem, although the anti-fascist movement can only hope to succeed in the long run by a boldly liberal and progressive policy, it must cooperate in any emergency with all decent conservative elements, even though they differ on economic theory. Otherwise the divided majority which respects civil liberties can never resist the ruthless, disciplined minority which takes advantage of civil liberties in order to destroy them."

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Despite persistent rumors that Cardinal Spellman will become Vatican Secretary of State, some Catholic circles are not so sure. No one denies that the New Yorker is the most popular and well-known of American prelates. But his close association with President Roosevelt is recalled, and not altogether with satisfaction by those who cannot forget that the late President's Tehran and Yalta policies have brought great dangers for the Catholic Church in Europe. President Roosevelt's influence on Cardinal Spellman was quite apparent; but the effect of any influence the Cardinal had on the President is much less clear. In short, according to Washington diplomats, the Vatican has such reason to doubt the New Yorker's political ability that it would be a surprise if the Pope entrusted to him such an important political post as the Vatican "Foreign Ministry".

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The facade of the Arab League is showing a crack. Transjordania and Iraq, both ruled by members of the Hashemite family, have been tentatively moving towards a federation composed of their two countries and consolidation of their armed forces. This would give them a formidable diplomatic position in the Near East; and their combined armies would be the strongest military factor among the Arab states. News of this projected arrangement has long since reached the ears of King Ibn Saud. The King formed Saudi Arabia following the last war by seizing territory belonging to the Hashemite dynasty. Fear of revenge on the part of the Hashemites and apprehension lest, after his death (he is an old man), his sons fail to hold Saudi Arabia together, has prompted him to seek an alliance with Egypt. Thus, within the Arab League, two factions have formed: Iraq and Transjordania vs. Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Meanwhile, the Hashemite leaders have been talking about a Greater Syria; to include Lebanon, and to be ruled by a Hashemite prince. Against this move Egypt and Saudi Arabia are encouraging those forces likely to be opposed to a Greater Syria, particularly in Lebanon and among the wild, untamed Druses.

On one policy, all states of the Arab League are united -- opposition to Zionism. Are the Levantine Jews united for Zionism? The clandestine Voice of Israel radio station, on February 26, assailed "anti-Zionist statements issued by Jewish individuals living in Arab states. The most recent was the publication of the statements by Jewish personages in Damascus and by some Jews in Iraq calling themselves the 'League for the Anti-Zionist Struggle'." Voice of Israel went on to call these Jews "quislings" and to charge them with being "willing to sell out millions of their people".

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Mr. John Foster Dulles is accorded the laurels -- together with Mrs. Roosevelt -- for the best work accomplished by our delegates at the London UNO meeting. Mr. Dulles is also praised for what is considered the most constructive suggestion so far offered for improving our participation in the United Nations Organization. In a speech before the Foreign Policy Association of Philadelphia on March 1, he urged that the United States delegates to future sessions of the UNO Assembly should be chosen well in advance, should be given time to develop policies in a bi-partisan way, and that the resultant program should go on the agenda "sufficiently in advance to enable the representatives of other states to be prepared to act with us". Our delegation to London was badly hampered by failure to provide such preparation, and once the meeting was under way Washington gave no clear guidance.

Mr. Dulles, asked about the effect of the atomic bomb on American-Soviet relations, said: "While many think our relations with Russia would have been better if we had given them secrets of the bomb, I know that if we had done so the Soviet Union would have thought we were slightly imbecile. Never has there been any request from the Soviet Union to know our secret of the bomb, and that is because under reverse conditions, it would never occur to them to share it."

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